

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

FRANKLIN INDUSTRIES CO

Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center

Franklin Industries Trains Staff To Make Money-Saving Process Changes

Client Profile:

Franklin Industries is a manufacturer of fence posts, highway posts, merchant products, and bedding angles, all hot-rolled from high strength, high carbon rail steel. The company, located in Franklin, Pennsylvania, was purchased from 102 year-old Franklin Steel in 2002, and currently employs 220 people.

Situation:

Franklin Industries' managers faced the challenge of guiding an economic and technological turnaround at the newly purchased company. Long-ingrained company culture was supported by workers with as many as 35 years of experience. Regarded as experts by other workers, some of them used and advocated outdated methods. The first goal of company managers was to change the culture by changing its practices and work habits. Their second goal was to reduce costs. Franklin Industries asked the Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance achieving both goals.

Solution:

NWIRC began by conducting a company-wide training assessment. This tool, a requirement of Pennsylvania's Workforce and Economic Development Network (WEDnetPA) Guaranteed Free Training program, produced far-reaching results. The assessment pointed out an opportunity to use training to initiate a culture change. Franklin Industries' managers also saw which direction the training should take, and were able to select a consultant who could offer services in those areas. The consultant introduced new concepts to company employees and demonstrated how process improvements could shape the future of the company. The employees embraced the training and took an active role in making money-saving improvements. NWIRC assisted Franklin Industries by facilitating its WEDnetPA grant and serving as project manager for an operations assessment and two subsequent training projects (subsidized by NWIRC).

Results:

Saving \$25,000 per month in reduced costs and production delays within two months of training.
Anticipating a \$50,000 per month savings in the coming quarter.

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Made an effective change to company culture.

Testimonial:

"The Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center's assessment provided verification that we were making the correct training decisions."

Lois Davis, Human Resources Director